DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 258 315 EA 017 737

AUTHOR Thomas, M. Donald
TITLE The Education Improvement Act of 1984.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 5p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrators; *Educational Attitudes; Elementary Secondary Education; *Politics of Education; Public Support; State Action; *State Legislation
IDENTIFIERS South Carolina; *South Carolina Education Improvement Act 1984

ABSTRACT

South Carolina's Education Improvement Act of 1984 is motivating, innovative, challenging, and satisfying. The law is motivating to the citizens of South Carolina because it promises increased student academic achievement, better services to special groups of students and school personnel, improved school conditions, extensive community involvement in school affairs, and higher public confidence in the schools. The law is innovative in recognizing the coalition behind its own success; incorporating incentive programs for teachers, principals, and schools; establishing a process for intervening where the quality of education is impaired; creating a Division of Public Accountability; and establishing annual assessment procedures. The movement for reform is challenging in that the coalition is fragile, continued managerial and financial maintenance of the effort is required, and the assessment program must be strong. The effort is satisfying because it can make a difference, showing the nation that South Carolina understands the values of education, is committed to its people, is informed in its actions, and is united in a common purpose. (PGD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
M. Donald Thomas
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED258315

THE EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1984

M. Donald Thomas

What is it that I can say about The Education Improvement Act of 1984 that is 1) sexy, 2) motivating, 3) innovative, 4) challenging, and 5) satisfying?

Let's begin with the sexy part first. (Story of Superintendent and sex education program.)

Second, let's discus the motivating part. Today our nation is gripped in an intense, state-by-state struggle to improve the quality of life and to attract economic development. In the February 1, 1985, Wall Street Journal there is the story of two cities: Lowell, Massachusetts, and Akron, Ohio. Lowell decided to do something about its economic conditions and it began by improving its schools.

Lowell knew that good schools attract people - people who care about the city and who establish economic vitality. Akron, on the other hand, has not yet learned this lesson. It continues to lose people, jobs, and superintendents of schools. The same could be said about Cleveland. Without good schools economic recovery is not possible.

What motivates us in South Carolina is what we will get from our investment in education, what will be contributed to our economic well-being. Here are six benefits we will obtain:

1. Higher student academic achievement
2. Better services to special groups of students
3. Better services to school personnel
4. Improved school conditions
5. Extensive community involvement in school affairs
6. Higher public confidence in South Carolina schools

Next, let's discuss the innovative features of the EIA.

The South Carolina law is imaginative - it is innovative in many ways:

EA 017 737

1. The EIA places into the law the coalition that helped to enact the legislation:
   a. The Partnership
   b. Committee on Financing Excellence in Education
   c. The Joint Subcommittee
   d. The Select Committee
   e. Community involvement at the local level
   f. The demographic trends
2. It creates incentive programs of a comprehensive nature:
   a. Incentive pay programs for teachers
   b. Incentive pay programs for principals
   c. School awards programs for effective schools
   d. Grants programs for teachers and schools
   e. Incentive pay programs with the Southeastern average as the base
3. The EIA contains an intervention process where the quality of education is impaired.
4. The EIA creates the Division of Public Accountability.
5. The EIA requires an annual assessment of the entire program

Now, what is the challenging part of the South Carolina reform movement:

1. Coalition is fragile
2. Balance of forces must be maintained
3. Continued financial support is essential
4. Strong assessment program must be established

There will always be forces to reduce financial support for education. Our challenge is to hold fast, to fight the good fight, and to maintain support for our schools

The challenge for us is to continue to work hard, to implement well the provisions of law, and to hold fast to the basic principles of reform.

Finally, what is it in the EIA that is satisfying?

You and I have an opportunity that is given to few people. The EIA is the vehicle to make a difference in this state - to show the nation that in South Carolina:

1. We have read our history and we understand the relationship between education and quality of life.
2. We know that good schools are the basis for economic vitality.
3. We have developed a commitment to our people and we value people above things.
4. We have read the literature and now have the ability to establish good schools by design and not be chance.
5. We have a common purpose supported by various interest groups who want good schools.

When the EIA is fully implemented, when the results of our efforts are established, many of us will retire or be within walking distance of the rocking chair. It is at that point that we will examine what we have done. You remember Theodore Drieser's Sister Carrie, rocking back and forth, back and forth, Sister Carrie regreted lost opportunity, wished that she could live her life over again - how different it would be. As she rocked back and forth she knew that the magic moment for her was gone. She had come face to fact with opportunity and failed to recognize it. Rocking was more miserable because of it and it was now too late.

It is much like Sara who listened to the chimes of the village clock - 1 - 2 - 3; 11 - 12 - 13. "Wake up," she said to her husband; "it is later than it's ever been!"

The struggle for economic vitality will not diminish. Good schools will always be a basis for attracting quality to our state. You and I have an opportunity at a time when it is later than most want to believe.

As we back into our own rocking chair, it is my hope that you and I will have nobler thoughts than that of Sister Carrie.

It is my hope that in 1985 school administrators in South Carolina, being sexy, innovative, motivated, and challenged will find satisfaction in helping to implement The Education Improvement Act of 1984.